Muslim Sects and Divisions

The Section on Muslim Sects
in Kitāb al-Milal wa 'l-Niḥal

by

Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm **Shahrastānī**
(d. 1153)

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Preface

When engaged in research in Muslim theology we found that, though there were a number of works in the English language on the subject which quoted original sources, apart from Seelye's translation of Baghdādī's *al-Farq bain al-Firaq*, there were no other translations in English of any other of the main sources for the theological thought of the Muslim sects. The need for further translation was apparent, especially as we found that Seelye's translation, which first appeared in 1910, was in need of revision. Because it was indispensable as a service-book, it appeared to us that there was no more useful work that could be translated than Shahrastani's *Kitāb al-Milal wa 'l-Niḥal*. We accordingly translated that part of *al-Milal* which deals with Muslim sects.

The greater part of our translation first appeared in a number of issues of *Abr-Nahrain*. This translation revised and improved, together with a translation of Shahrastani's long introduction, forms the present work. We express our thanks to E. J. Brill for their courtesy in giving permission to make use of the material already published in *Abr-Nahrain*.

Introduction

The majority of sources on the life of Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm Aḥmad al-Shahrastānī,[1] amongst them the *Wafayāt al-a'yān* of Ibn Khallikān, quote earlier sources that are no longer extant, particularly the *Kitāb al-Dhail* and *al-Taḥbīr* of al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Sa'īd b. al-Sam'ānī, a contemporary of Shahrastānī. The sources all agree that Shahrastānī was born at Shahrastān, a city in the Persian province of Khurāsān, where also he died; but there is no general agreement about the date of his birth. Ibn Khallikān says that according to his own notes on Shahrastānī he was born in AH 469 (AD 1076) and died in AH 548 (AD 1153). He adds, however, that Ibn al-Sam'ānī says that Shahrastānī himself when asked told him that he was born in AH 479 (AD 1086).[2]

Shahrastānī, according to Ibn Khallikān, was a prominent imām. He excelled in the knowledge of law and was a distinguished theologian. He had also studied *ḥadīth* literature. He taught for a time in the Niẓāmīya at Baghdad, where he spent three years, and where he also gained popularity as a preacher.[3] He wrote a number of books, seventeen of which, apart from the disputed *Mafātīḥ al-asrār wa maṣābīḥ al-abrār fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān* are known to us from various sources; among these is the *Kitāb al-Milal wa 'l-Niḥal*.[4]

Shahrastānī's school of thought

The earliest available source on the life of Shahrastānī, the *Tārīkh ḥukamā' al-Islām* by al-Baihaqī, who like al-Sam'ānī was Shahrastānī's contemporary and acquaintance, is a work of biographies of Muslim philosophers. Although Shahrastānī is included among them, it is clear that Baihaqī regarded him as a theologian as well as a philosopher.

Baihaqī tells us of a commentary on the Qur'ān on which Shahrastānī was engaged in writing, and in which he interpreted the Qur'ānic verses in the light of philosophy as well as the *sharī'a*.[5] Much to Shahrastānī's annoyance it was an enterprise of which Baihaqī disapproved on the grounds that ḥadīth and not philosophy can explain the Qur'ān. It appears that Baihaqī has some rather heated discussions with Shahrastānī, and pointed out that no one had combined *sharī'a* and philosophy better than al-Ghazālī.[6]

Baihaqī in fact criticized Shahrastānī from a traditionalist point of view; but, nevertheless, he recognized him both as a philosopher and a theologian. Indeed as a philosopher his merits are considerable. Guillaume in his introduction to his edition of Shahrastānī's *Kitāb Nihāyat al-Iqdām* regards him as 'the last great philosopher of Islam before Averroes':[7] an Ash'arite, it is true, though one who 'gave a general, but by no means blind allegiance to the Ash'arite school.'[8]

Serious doubts, however, were raised in the past, and have been more recently revived, as to whether Shahrastānī was in reality an Ash'arite. Al-Subkī, for example, in his *Ṭabaqāt*, says that, according to Dhahabī (AH 673/AD 1274-AH 748/AD 1348) in his *History*, al-Sam'ānī stated that Shahrastānī was suspected of supporting Ismā'īlī views. Nothing of this kind, he tells us, is said by Sam'ānī in his *Dhail*, though in his *Taḥbīr* he accuses Shahrastānī of heresy and of extreme Shī'ite tendencies. Subkī finds the accusation difficult to believe, as there is nothing in Shahrastānī's writings to support it, and thinks that as Sam'ānī does not mention it in his *Dhail* it was added to the *Taḥbīr* by someone else. But even if this were so the difficulty would still remain; for Subkī himself quotes 'the author of *al-Kāfī*', as saying, 'But for the confusion noticeable in his beliefs and his leanings towards the heretics, Shahrastānī would be the Imām in Islām.'[9]

It is possible that neither Sam'ānī nor the author of *al-Kāfī* wished to say more than that Shahrastānī was sympathetic to the Ismā'īlī faction; for *mayl*, which is perhaps the key word in their statements, may be understood in this way. Subkī at all events, regardless of the allegations made against Shahrastānī, includes him among the Shāfi'ite scholars. Al-Ṣafadī too in *Al-Wāfī* says that Shahrastānī having been a disciple of Shāfi'ite-Ash'arite teachers, himself became a theologian of the Ash'arite (Sunnite) school, and was an outstanding imām and *faqīh*.[10] As time passed it seems that Shahrastānī's sunnism was accepted without question. Thus the text of *Kitāb Nihāyat al-Iqdām fī 'ilm al-kalām*, edited by A. Guillaume, is presented by the copyist as الصدق مشائخ اهل السنة تاج الدين برهان الحق ترجمان .

عضد الشريعة من تصنيف امام الائمة سيد (a work of the Imām of the Imāms, Prince of the Sunnite *Shaikhs*, the Crown of Religion, the Proof of Certainty, Spokesman of Truth and Pillar of Sharī'a).

There is nothing moreover in the text of the two published works of Shahrastānī which would suggest Ismā'īlī tendencies, but rather the contrary. The phrase 'the view of our Shaikh al-Ash'arī' occurs frequently in the *Kitāb al-Iqdām*,[11] a work obviously in defence of Ash'arite theology. Even in the *Kitāb al-Milal*, where he attempts to be fair to all sects, his sympathies for the orthodox are unmistakeable.[12] Moreover in the *Milal* Shahrastānī clearly dissociates himself from the Shī'ites. Thus in his exposition of Ismā'īlīya beliefs he gives a translation in summary form of the 'new teaching'[13] as it appears in a treatise by Ḥasan al-Ṣabbāḥ, and says, 'We shall reproduce in Arabic what he has written in Persian, but the translator must not be censured.'[14] At the conclusion of the chapter he remarks, 'I have had many a debate with these people but they only say, "Is it you we need? Is it you we must listen to? Is it from you we must learn?"' He adds that he would often for the sake of argument grant that there was need, as they claimed, for a teacher, but would ask in vain where the teacher was and what he would teach. 'You have in reality,' he told them at last, 'closed the gate of knowledge, and opened instead the door of unquestioning submission and blind obedience.'[15]

From all this it would appear that Shahrastānī's orthodoxy was beyond doubt, but that, in the prevailing atmosphere of his day, his frequent contact and discussions with the Ismā'īlī *du'āt* (missionaries) aroused suspicion as to his orthodoxy.

The question of Shahrastānī's orthodoxy has today, however, once again been raised. In the library of the Iran National Assembly there is a manuscript of a *tafsīr* work, called *Mafātīḥ al-asrār wa maṣābīḥ al-abrār*, which bears Shahrastānī's name with the title 'Chief Missionary', and which begins with the famous opening of the *Kitāb al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal* cited almost entirely: 'Praise be to God that is due from all the grateful, a fullness of praise for all his favours; a praise that is abundant, sincere and blessed.'[16] None of the sources on Shahrastānī's biography mentions this work, though, as has been said, al-Baihaqī says that Shahrastānī was engaged in writing a *tafsīr*.

Dr Sayyid Nā'īnī in his introduction to the Persian translation of this work has no doubt that it is the *tafsīr* of which al-Baihaqī speaks. As the *tafsīr* contains a considerable amount of Shī'ite esoteric interpretation, Dr Sayyid Nā'īnī suggests that living quietly in his home

town in the last years of his life, and feeling that there was now nothing to prevent him revealing his real thoughts and beliefs, Shahrastānī in this *tafsīr* expressed his true views.[17] No convincing reasons, however, are given by Dr Nā'īnī for this opinion; and in view of what has already been said above of Shahrastānī's published and unpublished works, it is more probable that the *tafsīr* is the work of some unknown author who attributed it to Shahrastānī, and cited the opening of the *Kitāb al-Milal* in an attempt to show that it was by the same author.

Sources of *Kitāb al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal*

Of the *Kitāb al-Milal* Professor A. J. Arberry says, 'It is little more than a farrago of quotations from older writers, loosely arranged and inconsequently strung together without the slightest acknowledgment.'[18] Though this harsh judgment is not justified, it is nevertheless true that, with the exception of al-Ka'bī whose name occurs quite frequently, Shahrastānī rarely mentions his sources. Ka'bī, whose full name as given in the *Ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazila* of al-Murtaḍā was Abu 'l-Qāsim 'Abdullāh b. Maḥmūd al-Ka'bī, (d. AH 319/AD 931)[19] was a Mu'tazilite, and is mentioned at the very beginning of *al-Farq bain al-Firaq* of al-Baghdādī. He is the author of a work on sects known as the 'Maqālāt',[20] which seems to have been a commonly used source of information on the sects, particularly on the Mu'tazila. Unfortunately this work has not survived, and it is not possible to tell to what extent Shahrastānī used it directly as a source. However, as Ka'bī's name occurs far more often in the *Kitāb al-Milal* than any other author, it is likely that his *Maqālāt* was in fact extensively used by Shahrastānī.

As Shahrastānī is a professed Ash'arite one would naturally expect that he would consult Ash'ari's *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn*. In his notes to his edition of the text of the *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn*, Ritter shows by cross-references that not only Shahrastānī but also Baghdādī made considerable use of it as a source.[21] A close examination of the texts, however, shows that Shahrastānī's borrowing from the *Maqālāt* was greater on the Shī'ites and the Khārijites than on other sects.

Apart from the section on the Ismā'īlīya, where he seems to be quite independent, Shahrastānī draws heavily on the *Maqālāt* of Ash'arī in his exposition of Shī'ite views. Word by word quotation is frequent. Nevertheless he makes use of other sources at the same time, and often differs considerably from Ash'arī. The difference is most noticeable in the arrangement of the material. Ash'arī, for example, begins with the

Ghulāt (Extremists), whereas for Shahrastānī these form the fourth group.[22] The sub-sects also do not fully correspond. Thus Ash'arī includes the Bayānīya amongst the Ghulāt, but Shahrastānī on the other hand places them among the Kaisānīya. Shahrastānī, moreover, obviously making use of another source, gives a different and fuller account of them. Yet, though classifying them as Kaisanīya, he regards them as also being Ghulāt; for he says of Bayān, the leader of the sect, that 'He was an extremist who believed in the divinity of 'Alī.'[23]

Occasionally in his borrowing Shahrastānī alters Ash'arī's expression so as to give a slight change of meaning. Sometimes indeed the change of meaning is significant. Thus, for example, Ash'arī says, 'The Mufaḍḍalīya not only believed in the divinity of Ja'far but also claimed prophethood and apostleship for him.' Shahrastānī, on the other hand, says, 'He (Mufaḍḍal) believed in the Lordship of Ja'far, but not in his prophethood and apostleship.'[24] Often, however, as we have said, the exact wording of Ash'arī is reproduced. Shahrastānī's account, for example, of the Mughīrīya (except for the introduction which is not found in the *Maqālāt*, and the conclusion of the *Maqālāt* which does not appear in the *Kitāb al-Milal*), is in entire verbal agreement with that of Ash'arī. There is much verbal similarity, too, with the *Maqālāt* in Shahrastānī's accounts of the Manṣūrīya and the Khaṭṭābīya.

The same can also be said of the section on the Khārijites. Thus apart from minor variations whole passages on the Yazīdīya and the Baihasīya are literal quotations from the *Maqālāt* of al-Ash'arī.

An actual Shī'ite source which Shahrastānī does not appear to have used is the *Kitāb al-Maqālāt wa 'l-firaq* by Sa'd b. 'Abdullāh al-Ash'arī al-Qummī. There is no disagreement, however, between his account of the Shī'ites and that of al-Qummī, though on the extremist groups al-Qummī is, if anything, rather more severe than Shahrastānī.

In his treatment of the Mu'tazila Shahrastānī, in addition to Ka'bī, sometimes cites the *Faḍīḥa al-Mu'tazila* of Ibn al-Rāwandī. This is an anti-Mu'tazilite work, which, like the *Maqālāt* of al-Ka'bī, has not survived. Quotations from it, however, are found in the *Kitāb al-Intiṣār wa 'l-radd 'alā Ibn al-Rāwandī* by Abu 'l-Ḥusain al-Khayyāṭ al-Mu'tazilī, and from these it is possible to verify some direct quotations by Shahrastānī from Ibn al-Rāwandī, including some not acknowledged by him. Thus, for example, the statement, 'God created all existing things at one time', attributed to al-Naẓẓām, appears to be quoted directly from Ibn al-Rāwandī without acknowledgment; for al-Khayyāṭ criticizes Ibn al-Rāwandī for reporting it, though untrue, of al-Naẓẓām.[25] Similarly the section on the Murdārīya has a statement

which is found attributed by al-Khayyāṭ to Ibn al-Rāwandī and criticized by him.[26] It is probable, indeed, that, while use is possibly made also of al-Ka'bī, the whole section on the Murdārīya is a reconstruction of Ibn al-Rāwandī.

The other major sources of the Mu'tazila are *al-Farq bain al-firaq* of Baghdādī and *al-Tabṣir fī 'l-dīn wa tamyīz al-firqa al-nājiya* of al-Isfarā'īnī. It is difficult to tell the full extent to which they are used; for as both Baghdādī and Isfarā'īnī occasionally acknowledge al-Ka'bī and Ibn al-Rāwandī as sources, one cannot always be sure whether Shahrastānī in quoting these latter is doing so directly, or indirectly through Baghdādī and Isfarā'īnī.

From both Baghdādī and Isfarā'īnī there is a considerable amount of word by word quotation, especially from Isfarā'īnī; as, for example, the following comment on Wāṣil: 'These are the views of Wāṣil, the head of the Mu'tazila, about the leading Companions and the Imāms of the Family.'[27] Often too the same or similar passage in Shahrastānī is found in both Baghdādī and Isfarā'īnī; but it is likely that in these instances Shahrasānī is following Isfarā'īnī, who in turn is quoting from Baghdādī or paraphrasing him.

An interesting example of a similarity but with a difference between Baghdādī and Shahrastānī is their account of the genesis of Muslim sects. Baghdādī tells us that the first difference in the Muslim community was the one that occurred at Muḥammad's death, when 'Umar protested that Muḥammad had not died.[28] This was followed by the dispute on Muḥammad's place of burial. Afterwards came the disputes on the imāmate, on Fidak, and on the *zakāt*. Shahrastānī in his introduction, though he mentions all these disputes given by Baghdādī, says that the first one was the dispute of the hypocrites with the Prophet.[29]

Shahrastānī differs also from Baghdādī in his treatment of the Khābiṭīya and Ḥadathīya. These sects, which al-Khayyāṭ does not even mention, are not included among the Mu'tazila sub-sects by Baghdādī, and though he gives an exposition of their views he does not regard them as belonging to the fold of Islam.[30] Isfarā'īnī, on the other hand, as does Shahrastānī, treats them as Mu'tazila. In the first part of his account of them Shahrastānī follows Isfarā'īnī, but the last part is based on Baghdādī.

There is, however, as much as a third of that part of the *Kitāb al-Milal* which treats of the sects, for which it was not possible to trace sources. Thus, for instance, no source could be found for Naẓẓām's well-known illustration of his theory of leaps with the example of ropes.[31]

Generally speaking, Shahrastānī reports the views of the sects

without elaboration and without comments. Sometimes, however, he offers a brief criticism. Thus, for example, he criticizes Naẓẓām's theory of leaps by remarking that the difference between walking and leaping amounts to no more than a difference between corresponding lengths of time.[32] He also finds fault with Mu'ammar's idea that *ḥudūth* (occurrence) and *'adam* (non-existence) are accidents, and that God only created bodies, on the grounds that it would follow that God did not act at all.[33] Again of Abu 'l-Hudhail's theory of rest to avoid infinity he simply says that the problem still remains.[34]

Shahrastānī's expression in ***al-Milal wa 'l-Niḥal*** is at times very difficult and obscure, due mainly to his compressing a great amount of material in short statements. We have succeeded in 'unlocking the mysteries' in most cases in our translation of the book. It is undoubtedly a major work in medieval Arabic literature on religions and heresies, better organized in its material than most of the other works. One can accept without difficulty al-Subkī's judgment on *Kitāb al-Milal wa 'l-Niḥal*: 'It is in my view the best book in this field.'[35]

It is with great pleasure, therefore, that we present our rendition in English of the major portion of Part 1 of the work, which deals with Muslims, their sects and schools of thought. The Arabic text from which the translation was made is that edited by Muḥammad b. Fatḥullāh Badrān.[36] Manuscripts in the library of 'Ārif Ḥikmat in Medīna were also consulted; but they were not notably different from Badrān's text, and of no help in solving the difficulties of certain passages.

Translation

Kitāb al-Milal wa 'l-Nihal

Praise be to God that is due from all the grateful, a fullness of praise for all his favours: a praise that is abundant, sincere and blessed. May the blessing of God be upon Muḥammad, the chosen one, the apostle of mercy and the seal of the prophets; and upon his descendants who are good and pure: a blessing lasting to the day of judgment, like the blessing bestowed upon Abraham and his descendants. Indeed, God is most worthy to be praised and glorified.

When God enabled me to study the religious beliefs of different peoples (both those belonging to various religions and communities, as well as those following other beliefs and creeds), to investigate also their sources and to seek out both the familiar and the unfamiliar, I decided to gather all this information into a brief compendium containing all the religious beliefs and creeds of different peoples, so as to provide a lesson to one who can reflect and a means of reflection for one who can draw a lesson.

Before proceeding with my main purpose it will be necessary for me to write five introductory chapters. The aim of the first will be to give an enumeration of the different divisions of mankind; of the second to specify the principles on which the numbering of Islamic sects is based; of the third to explain the first questioning that arose in the universe: who caused it and in whom it manifested itself; of the fourth to explain the first questioning that arose in the Muslim community: how it arose, who caused it and in whom it manifested itself; of the fifth to explain the reason which made it necessary to arrange this book according to a mathematical system.

General Introduction

1 General explanation of divisions of mankind

Some divide mankind according to seven regions, ascribing to the inhabitants of each region their natures and psychological dispositions, as indicated by their different colours and languages. Others make a division according to four zonal regions east, west, south and north, describing each region by its particular characteristics, namely, by its different natures and laws. Others, again, base their division on peoples. According to them, the major peoples are four: Arabs, Persians, Greeks and Indians. These people they divide into two groups. Thus they say that the Arabs and Indians so closely resemble one another as almost to share the one outlook. Both seek to determine the particular properties of things, to look for the laws of essences and ultimate realities, and to pursue spiritual things. The Greeks and Persians, too, so closely resemble one another as almost to share the one outlook. They seek to determine the nature of things, to look for their qualitative and quantitative properties, and to pursue material things.

Others divide men according to their ideas and beliefs. That also is what we intend to do in this book. The first and most correct division is into those who belong to certain religions and religious communities, and those who follow other beliefs and creeds. In general those who follow religions are: Magians, Jews, Christians and Muslims. Those following other beliefs and creeds are: philosophers, atheists, Sabaeans, worshippers of stars and idols, and Brahmins. Each in turn is divided into various groups. Those following philosophical and other beliefs do not appear to be restricted in number. However the sects following a religion are definite in number, as tradition tells us, the Magians being divided into seventy sects, the Jews into seventy-one, the Christians

into seventy-two and the Muslims into seventy-three. Salvation belongs to only one sect. The reason is that where there are two opposite propositions the truth is in one only. Where there are contradictory propositions wholly opposed to one another, one is necessarily true and the other necessarily false. The truth, therefore, is in one and not in the other. It is impossible to hold of two disputants, who are wholly in conflict on rational principles, that both are right and in possession of the truth. Since the truth in every rational question is one, then the truth in all questions can be found in one sect alone. This we know on the authority of revelation. The Qur'ān tells us in the words of God: 'Of those we created are a nation who guide by the truth and by it act with justice.'[1]

The Prophet also said, 'My community will be divided into seventy-three sects but only one of these will be saved, the others will perish.' When asked which was the one that would attain salvation he replied, 'Those who follow the *sunna* and the congregation.' He was further asked, 'What is the *sunna* and the congregation?' He replied, 'That which I and my companions practice.' The Prophet is also reported to have said, 'In my community there will always be some who till the day of judgment will possess the truth.' Again, he said, 'My community will never agree on an error.'

2 Specification of the principles on which the division of Islamic sects is based

Writers on Islamic sects have different ways of dividing them without following any rule based on a principle or a text, nor any definite and clearly manifested method. Therefore I have not found any two authors in agreement on a system by which the sects are divided.

It is commonly known and accepted that not every one differing from another in holding certain views on one question or another is to be regarded as the founder of a doctrine. The doctrines otherwise could hardly be numbered; for anyone who was alone in holding certain views on, for example, the question of substances, would have to be included among the founders of doctrines. There must, therefore, be some principle determining which questions are basic and fundamental, differences in which are sectarian differences; one proposing such differences, therefore, must be regarded as the founder of a doctrine. Nevertheless, I have not found any of the writers on doctrines attempting to establish such a principle; they simply introduce the views of the

different sects of the community in a haphazard manner as they happen to find them, their treatment not being based on any firm rule or fixed principle. Accordingly, doing as well as I could, I restricted the differences to four fundamental points or major principles.

The first fundamental point concerns the attributes and the unity of God in relation to the attributes. This point includes the question of the existence of eternal attributes, which are affirmed by some and denied by others. It also involves an exposition of the essential attributes and attributes of action; of what is obligatory on God; of what is possible for him and what is impossible. There is a difference in these questions between the Ash'arites, the Karrāmites, the Mujassima and the Mu'tazilites.

The second fundamental point is concerned with *qadar* and justice. This includes such questions as divine decree and predestination, predetermination and acquisition, the willing of good and evil, that which is within one's power and that which is within one's knowledge. On all these there are varying opinions, as, for example, between the Qadarites, Najjārites, Jabrites, Ash'arites and Karrāmites.

The third fundamental point concerns 'promise and warning', names and judgments, *al-asmā' wa 'l-aḥkām*. It includes such questions as *īmān* (faith), repentance, warning, postponement, 'declaring someone an unbeliever' and 'leading astray'. On all these questions, too, some say one thing, some say another, as, for example, the Murji'ites, the Wa'īdīya, the Mu'tazilites, the Ash'arites and the Karrāmites.

The fourth fundamental point concerns relevation and reason, apostleship and imāmate. It includes such questions as the goodness of the good and the evil of the evil; [God's doing of] the good or the best; grace; sinlessness in prophets; the conditions required for the imāmate: whether it is based on appointment by decree, as some hold, or on the agreement of the community, as others maintain; the manner of the transmission of the imāmate according to those who believe in imāmate by decree, or its determination according to those believing in agreement. In this question there is a difference between the Shī'a, the Khawārij, the Mu'tazila, the Karrāmites and the Ash'arites.

Whenever one of the leading individuals of the community was found holding an independent viewpoint on one of these fundamental aspects, we considered his view as forming a school of thought, and his followers as constituting a sect. If, however, we found someone holding an independent view on a secondary question we did not consider his view as forming a school of thought, nor his followers as constituting a sect; instead, we included him in one or other of the schools to which

his views most corresponded, giving his views the status of a branch rather than a school on its own. In this way the schools have not become too many in number.

When fundamental points which were questions of dispute were thus determined, the basic divisions of Islamic sects were clearly seen; and the major sects, after some of the others were assimilated to them, were reduced to four. These principal Islamic sects are: the Qadarites, the Ṣifātīya, the Khawārij and the Shī'a. These four become intermingled, and at the same time various sub-sects are derived from each, numbering in all seventy-three.

Writers on sects follow two different methods of procedure. The first is to adopt questions as headings, and under each question give the views of all the groups and sects. The second is to use the names of individuals and founders of sects as headings, and to give their views on every question. This brief compendium is arranged according to the second method; for we have found that this method is more accurate, and also more in accord with the principles given in our chapter on calculations.

I impose upon myself the obligation of giving the views of each sect as I find them in their works without favour or prejudice, without declaring which are correct and which are incorrect, which are true and which are false; though, indeed, the glimpses of the truth and the odour of lies will not remain undetected by minds versed in intellectual matters. And God will be our help.

3 An Explanation of the first doubt that arose in the world: from whom it first arose and in whom it was finally manifested

The first doubt that arose in the world was the doubt of Iblīs: may the curse of God be on him! Its source was his assumption of independence in opposition to a clear instruction; his preference for his own inclination over a command; his pride in the matter out of which he was created, that is, fire, in contrast to the matter out of which Adam was created, that is, dust. From this doubt seven other doubts arose which spread amongst men and permeated their thinking till they became sources of erroneous and false beliefs. These doubts are found mentioned in commentaries on the four gospels, namely, Luke, Mark, John and Matthew; they are also mentioned in the Torah in various places in the form of dialogues between Iblīs and the angels after the command given him to make obeisance, and his refusal to do so.

Iblīs is reported to have said:

> I admit that God is my God and the God of creation, knowing and powerful; that his power and will cannot be questioned, and that whenever he wills a thing he says to it 'Be,' and it becomes. I also admit that he is wise, but concerning his wisdom a number of questions can be raised.

The angels asked, 'What are these questions and how many are they?' Iblīs replied: 'Seven.' He continued:

> The first question is, that as God knew before he created me what I would do and how I would act, why did he create me? And what is his wisdom in creating me?
>
> Secondly, if he created me in accordance with his will and pleasure, why did he command me to know and obey him? Moreover, since he does not derive any benefit from obedience, nor is he harmed by disobedience, what is the wisdom in this command?
>
> Thirdly, when he created me and commanded me to acknowledge and obey him, I adhered to his command, and acknowledged and obeyed him. Why, then, did he command me to obey Adam and make obeisance to him? What is his wisdom in this particular command, since it does not add to my knowledge of him, nor increase my obedience to him?
>
> Fourthly, when he created me and not only commanded me in general, but gave me also this particular command, then, when I did not make obeisance to Adam, why did he curse me and cast me out of paradise? What is the wisdom in this? I committed no other evil than saying, 'I shall make obeisance only to you.'
>
> Fifthly, when he created me and gave me both a general and a particular command, and I did not obey him, he cursed me and drove me away. Why, then, did he give me access to Adam, so that I entered paradise a second time and deceived him by my evil suggestion? Adam consequently ate of the forbidden tree, and God expelled him from paradise with me. What is the wisdom in this? Had he prevented me from entering paradise, Adam would have eluded me and would have been there for ever.
>
> Sixthly, after God had created me and given me both a general and a particular command; after he had cursed me and given me re-entrance to paradise, where a dispute took place between me and Adam, why did he give me power over his descendants in such a way that I could see them but they could not see me? Why were my

evil suggestions able to influence them, but they had no power or influence of any kind over me? What is the wisdom in this? If God had created them and given them their nature with no one seeking to make them deviate from it, they would have lived pure, attentive and submissive. This would have been more fitting for them and more in harmony with wisdom.

Seventhly, I admit all this, namely, that God created me, that he gave me both a general and a particular command, and that when I did not obey him he cursed me and expelled me from paradise; also, that when I wanted to re-enter paradise he allowed me to do so and gave me access to it; that when I did the thing I did he cast me out but gave me power over mankind. Why, then, after that, when I asked him to give me respite, did he give me respite? I said to God, 'My Lord, respite me till the day they shall be raised.' He said, 'Thou art among the ones that are respited unto the day of a known time.'[2]

What is the wisdom in this? If he had destroyed me at that time, Adam and the whole of mankind would have been beyond my power, and there would have been no evil in the world. Is not the enduring of the world in right order better than the world mixed with evil?

Iblīs then added: 'So this is my argument for what I maintain on each question.'

The commentator of the Gospel says that God told the angels to say to Iblīs:

> Your first admission that I am your God and the God of creation was not truthful and sincere, for if you had indeed meant that I am the Lord of the universe you would not have asked the question why; for I am God, and there is no God but Me. I am not to be questioned as to what I do, but men are questioned as to what they do.

What I have related is found in the Torah and also in [the commentaries on] the New Testament in the way that I have described them. I have often thought and said that it is quite clear that every doubt entertained by the descendants of Adam was due to the misleading action of the accursed devil and his evil suggestions,and had developed from his doubts. As, however, his doubts are confined to seven, the major innovations and errors can also be reduced to seven. Indeed, the doubts of the heretical cannot go beyond these doubts, even though they are differently expressed and follow different paths; for these doubts are

like the seeds of different kinds of errors that are found, and they can all be summed up in non-acceptance of the command after the admission of the truth, and in following personal inclination as opposed to clear instruction.

All those who disputed with Noaḥ, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Abraham, Lot, Sbu'aib, Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad, all followed the same pattern as the first accursed one in the manifestation of his doubt. These disputations may be summarized as a refusal to be subject to command and a refusal to accept all the lawgivers and the laws; for there is no difference between their saying, 'Is a mortal man going to show us the path?'[3] and Iblīs saying, 'Shall I make obeisance to one you have created of clay?'[4] Accordingly, the starting-point of dispute and the cause of differences is that mentioned in the word of God: 'And naught prevented men from believing when the guidance came to them, but that they said, "Has God sent forth a mortal as Messenger?"'[5] God has thus made it clear that the obstacle to faith is this idea alone.

As we have been told in the Qur'ān, when man's predecessor was asked by God, 'What prevented thee to bow thyself, when I commanded thee' He replied, 'I am better than he; Thou didst create me of fire, and him Thou didst create of clay.'[6] In the same way his successor said, 'I am better than this man who is contemptible.'[7]

Similarly, if we consider the words of their predecessors we will find them corresponding to the words of those who came after: 'So spoke those before them as these men say; their hearts are much alike.'[8] So they refused to believe what the earlier ones had rejected.

The first accursed one, then, when he imposed a judgment of reason on one who cannot be judged by reason, had either to apply the law of the Creator to the created being, or the law of the created being to the Creator. The first errs by excess, the second by default. From the first error arose the following sects: the Incarnationists, the Transmigrationists, the Anthropomorphists (Mushabbiha), and the Extremists among the Shī'a who went so far as to give a man the attributes of God. From the second error arose the schools of Qadarites, Jabrites and Mujassima who were remiss in their description of God, and bestowed upon him the attributes of created beings. The Mu'tazilites are anthropomorphists in the matter of deeds, and the Mushabbiha are incarnationists in the matter of attributes. Each of them has a one-eyed point of view, because whoever says, 'What befits us befits God, and what does not befit us does not befit God,' has made the Creator like to the created; and whoever says, 'God can be described in the same terms in which man is described', or vice versa, has strayed from the path of truth.

The root of the Qadarite doctrine is in seeking the reason for everything. This in turn is rooted in the first accursed one demanding, firstly, the reason for creation; secondly, the wisdom of command; and, thirdly, the benefit of the command to make obeisance to Adam. From this root the sect of the Khārijites developed, because there is no difference between their saying. 'There is no judgment but that of God, and we do not appoint men as judges,' and the saying of the devil, 'I shall not make obeisance except to you. Should I make obeisance to a mortal you created from clay?'[9]

Indeed, to go from the medium to either extreme is to be condemned. The Mu'tazilites went to extremes on the question of the unity of God, and fell into *ta'ṭīl* by denying God's attributes. The Mushabbiha, on the other hand, fell short and ascribed to God bodily attributes. The Rāfiḍites went into extremes in the matter of the prophethood and the imāmate, and arrived at the doctrine of incarnation. The Khawārij fell short when they refused to allow men to be appointed as judges.

If you look, you will see that all these errors spring from the errors of the first accursed one. These first errors were the origins and the later ones their manifestations. The Qur'ān refers to this in the words of God: 'Follow not the steps of Satan; he is a manifest foe to you.'[10]

The Prophet compared each of the misguided sects of his community with a misguided people of former times. Thus he said, 'The Qadarites are the Magians of this community, the Mushabbiha the Jews of the community, and the Rāfiḍites its Christians.' Speaking in general terms he said, 'You will walk along the path of former peoples in exactly the same way, so much so that if they have entered the hole of a lizard you will enter it too.'

4 An explanation of the first error that arose in the Muslim community: how it arose, in whom it arose, and in whom it was manifested

We have shown that the errors that arose in later times are precisely the same errors which occurred in the very beginning. In the same way we can show that, during the epoch of every prophet and founder of a community or a religion, the errors in his community at the end of the epoch arose from the errors of his enemies at the beginning of his epoch, that is, from infidels and unbelievers, most of whom were hypocrites. All this may be concealed from us with respect to former peoples because of the long period of time that has passed; but with respect to this

community it is no secret that its errors arose from the errors of hypocrites at the time of the Prophet, who did not accept his judgment in what he commanded or forbade, and began to reason on their own accord where there was no scope for reasoning, asked questions in fields in which it was forbidden to enter or enquire, and disputed baselessly where dispute was not permitted. Consider [for example] the tradition about Dhu 'l-Khuwaiṣira al-Tamīmī when he said, 'Do justice, O Muḥammad, for you have failed to do justice.' Whereupon Muḥammad replied, 'If I do not do justice who will?' But the accursed man reiterated what he had said, and went on, 'This is a distribution in which the thought of God was not present.' This was a clear rebellion against the Prophet. If then a person who has criticized a true imām becomes a Khārijite, how much more fitting it is that one who has criticized the prophet should be called a Khārijite? Is not this criticism equivalent to holding a thing good or evil on the basis of reason, and of judging according to one's own ideas in opposition to a clear command? Is it not a contemptuous rejection of a command on the basis of some form of analogy? The Prophet at last said, 'Out of the loins of this man a people will come forth who will flee from religion as an arrow flies from the bow.'

Consider also the story of another group of hypocrites in the battle of Uḥud, who asked, 'Do we have any say in the matter?'[11] Or their words, 'If they had been with us they would not have died nor been killed.'[12] Is not this a clear expression of belief in man's power? Or consider another group of polytheists who said, 'Had God wished we would have worshipped no other beside God.'[13] Or the words of another group who said, 'Shall we give food to those to whom God would have given to eat had he wished?'[14] Is not this a clear expression of the idea of predeterminism? Consider, too, the story of another group who disputed concerning God himself, delving into the mysteries of his majesty and his actions, till God forbade them to do so, and filled their hearts with fear by the words: 'He looses the thunderbolts and smites with them whomsoever he will; yet they dispute about God, who is mighty in power.'[15]

This is what happened in the lifetime of the Prophet when he was strong, powerful and in good health. The hypocrites at the time acted deceitfully, outwardly manifesting *islām* and hiding their unbelief. Their hypocrisy, however, showed itself in their constant criticism of whatever Muḥammad did or did not do. These criticisms were like seeds from which grew a crop of errors.

As for the differences that arose among the Companions at the time of the Prophet's sickness and after his death, these are said to have been

differences of personal judgment, *ikhtilāfāt ijtihādiya*, and their aim was simply to maintain the rites of the *sharī'a* and to establish religious practices.

The first dispute that took place during the Prophet's sickness, according to what the Imām Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī relates on the authority of 'Abdullāh b. 'Abbās, is as follows. When the last sickness of the Prophet became acute, he said, 'Bring me an inkpot and writing material; I shall write something for you so that you will not be led astray after my departure.' 'Umar said, 'The Prophet has been overcome by pain, God's book is sufficient for us.' A noisy argument arose among those gathered; whereupon the Prophet said, 'Go away; there should be no quarrelling in my presence.' Ibn 'Abbās says, 'What a tragedy which prevented us from having some writing of the Prophet!' The second dispute during his sickness occurred in the following way. The Prophet said, 'Prepare the army of Usāma; cursed be the one who fails to join it!' Some said that they must carry out his command, especially as Usāma had already left the city. Others, however, said, 'The Prophet's sickness has become very serious; we cannot bear parting with him while he is in this condition. So we shall wait and see what happens.'

I have referred to these two disputes because critics might regard them as differences which have affected the faith. This, however, is not so. Their aim was simply to uphold religious principles at a time when hearts were unsettled, and to cool down the heat of strife which is very powerful at a time of change.

The third dispute was at the Prophet's death, when 'Umar said, 'If anyone says that Muḥammad has died I shall kill him with this sword of mine. He has been taken up to heaven as Jesus was.' Abū Bakr b. Abū Quḥāfa, however, said, 'Whoever worshipped Muḥammad, Muḥammad is dead; whoever worshipped the God of Muḥammad, the God of Muḥammad is living; he has not died and shall not die.' He then recited the words of God:

> Muḥammad is naught but a Messenger; Messengers have passed away before him. Why, if he should die or is slain, will you turn about on your heels? If any man should turn about on his heels, he will not harm God in any way; and God will recompense the thankful.[16]

People then accepted what Abū Bakr was saying, and 'Umar said, 'It is as though I had never heard this verse till Abū Bakr read it.'

The fourth dispute concerned the place of the Prophet's burial. The emigrés from Mecca wanted to take him back to Mecca, for this was

where he grew up, this was where his people dwelt, and this was where he also stayed. The Anṣār of Medīna wanted to bury him in Medīna, because that was where he migrated and where he received help. Some wanted to take him to Jerusalem, because that was the burial place of the prophets, and it was from there that his ascension to heaven took place. Finally, all agreed to bury him in Medīna when the saying of the Prophet was remembered that the prophets are buried where they die.

The fifth dispute arose over the imāmate. The greatest dispute, indeed, in the community has been that over the imāmate; for no sword has ever been drawn in Islam on a religious question as it has been drawn at all times on the question of the imāmate. It was easily resolved by the help of God in the early days when a difference arose about it between the emigrés and the Anṣār. The Anṣār said, 'There should be one *amīr* chosen from amongst us and one from amongst you,' and unanimously nominated their chief Sa'd b. 'Ubāda al-Anṣārī. Abū Bakr and 'Umar, however, corrected this immediately by going together to the meeting-place of Banū Sā'ida. 'Umar says:

> On our way I was preparing a speech in my mind. When we reached the meeting-place I attempted to speak; but Abū Bakr said, 'Stop, 'Umar!' He then praised God, and spoke all that I was preparing in my mind as though he was reporting the unseen. Then before the Anṣār could enter into discussion, I stretched out my hands to him and swore allegiance to him. Everyone else did likewise and the discord ended. This episode of the swearing of allegiance to Abū Bakr occurred unexpectedly, and God saved Muslims from its evil outcome. If anyone should do the same thing again let him be put to death. Any man who swears allegiance to another without consultation with other Muslims commits an act of deception; both of them must be put to death.

The Anṣār surrendered their demands only because Abū Bakr reported the Prophet as saying that the imāms are to be from the Quraish.

That is what occurred in the meeting-place. When Abū Bakr returned to the mosque, people crowded on him and readily swore allegiance to him, with the exception of some of the Banū Hashim and of Abū Sufyān of the Umayyads. 'Alī b. Abū Ṭālib, however, was occupied in carrying out what the Prophet had ordered him to do, that is, to prepare him for burial, perform the burial itself, and remain by his grave, without entering upon any dispute or argument.

The sixth dispute was on the question of Fadak and its inheritance from the Prophet, when Fāṭima was claiming it as heiress, or even as

owner. She was finally persuaded to abandon her claim by the famous tradition of the Prophet: 'We prophets do not bequeath an inheritance; what we leave behind is in charity.'

The seventh dispute was over the question of fighting those who refused to pay the zakāt. Some said, 'We shall not fight them in the same way as we fight unbelievers'; but others said, 'On the contrary, we shall fight them.' Abū Bakr at last said, 'If they do not give me the hobbling-cord they used to give the Prophet, I shall fight them.' He thereupon made preparations to do battle with them. All the Companions, too, agreed with him. 'Umar, during his caliphate, exercising his personal judgment, returned the captured property, and released the prisoners and captives.

The eighth dispute was over Abū Bakr's appointment of 'Umar as caliph at his death. Some said to him, 'You have placed over us a man of very harsh and unbending disposition.' The dispute ended when Abū Bakr said, 'If God were to ask me on the day of judgment I would say, "I have placed over them the best man amongst them."' During 'Umar's reign a number of differences arose, as, for example, on the question of the right of inheritance of a grandfather, of brothers and of distant relatives. There was also the question of compensation for the loss of fingers and teeth, and the punishment of crimes about which no clear instruction had been handed down.

Of all their affairs their conflict with the Greeks and Persians was the most important at this period. God granted victory to the Muslims who took many captives and much booty, with everyone following the directions of 'Umar. The message spread, the word of God became supreme, the Arabs submitted, and the resistance of the non-Arabs was weakened.

The ninth dispute was over the question of consultation, *shūra*, [instituted by 'Umar for the election of a caliph], different views being expressed about it. All agreed to swear allegiance to 'Uthmān and everything was in order. Islam continued to be preached in his time, many conquests were made and the treasury was full. 'Uthmān treated people well and showed himself generous. However, his relatives among the Umayyads stirred up the fires of hell, and he was consumed in the conflagration; they acted unjustly and cruelly, and he reaped the fruits of their cruelty. In his reign many disputes arose, and he was blamed for many incidents which should be laid to the account of the Umayyads.

Among these disputes was 'Uthmān's giving permission to al-Ḥakam b. Umayya to return to Medīna after the Prophet had driven him away from it. Al-Ḥakam used to be referred to as the one expelled by the

Prophet. He had previously appealed to Abū Bakr, and 'Umar even expelled him a further forty leagues from his abode in the Yemen.

'Uthmān also exiled Abū Dharr to al-Rabdha, gave his daughter in marriage to Marwān b. al-Ḥakam and allowed him to keep a fifth of the booty from Africa, which was equivalent in value to two hundred thousand dinars. He gave refuge to 'Abdullāh b. Sa'd b. Abū Sarḥ who was his nursing foster-brother, though the Prophet had declared his blood forfeit. 'Uthmān also appointed him as governor of Egypt and all its provinces. Again he appointed 'Abdullāh b. 'Āmir as governor of Baṣra where he did what he did.

The governors of 'Uthmān's provinces were as follows: Mu'āwiya b. Abū Sufyān, the governor of Syria; Sa'd b. Abū Waqqāṣ, the governor of Kūfa, who was followed by Walīd b. 'Uqba and Sa'īd b. al-'Āṣ; 'Abdullāh b. 'Āmir, the governor of Baṣra, and 'Abdullāh b. Sa'd b. Abū Sarḥ, the governor of Egypt. They all utterly abandoned him, till at last he met his fate, and he was unjustly murdered in his house. As a result of the cruelty to which he was subjected civil strife broke out which is not yet fully settled.

The tenth dispute took place during the reign of 'Alī, the Commander of the Faithful, after he had been unanimously accepted and allegiance had been sworn to him. To begin with, Ṭalḥa and Zubair went to Mecca and induced 'Ā'isha to go to Baṣra with them. They subsequently fought a battle against 'Alī, known as the Battle of the Camel. However, both later had a change of heart and repented, for 'Alī reminded them of something which they remembered. While fleeing from battle Zubair was killed by a bow-shot of Ibn Jarmūz, who is now in hell, because the Prophet said, 'Give the murderer of Ibn Ṣafīya the news that he will go to hell.' Ṭalḥa was struck dead by an arrow from Marwān b. al-Ḥakam while fleeing from battle. As for 'Ā'isha she had been induced to act as she did, but afterwards regretted it and repented.

As for the dispute between 'Alī and Mu'āwiya, the Battle of Ṣiffīn, the opposition of the Khārijites who forced 'Alī to accept arbitration, the treachery of 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ to Abū Mūsa al-Ash'arī and the continuation of the dispute till his death – all these are well known. Similarly the dispute between 'Alī and the Khārijites, the assembling of the latter at Nahrawān, their turning against him, their vilifying of him and their entering into an armed conflict against him – all this also is well known. On the whole 'Alī was on the side of the truth, and the truth on his side. 'Alī witnessed in his times not only those who rebelled against him, such as Ash'ath b. Qais, Mis'ar b. Fadakī al-Tamīmī, Zaid b. Ḥuṣain al-Ṭāī and others, but also those who went to extremes in his favour, as

'Abdullāh b. Saba' and his followers. From these two groups arose innovation and error. Thus the words of the Prophet came true: 'Two kinds of people will perish because of you: those who bear you an intense love and those who bear you an intense hatred.'

Subsequently the disputes became grouped under two headings. One was the dispute over the question of the imāmate and the other the dispute on matters of doctrine. The dispute over the imāmate was based on two different points of view. One was to assert that the imāmate was established by agreement and election; the other to hold that it was established by decree and appointment. Those who believed that the imāmate was established by agreement and election believed in the imāmate of anyone on whom the community, or a significant section of the community, had agreed. This could be anyone in general provided, as some held, that he was a Quraishite; or, as others maintained, that he was a Hāshimite, and so on. Those who held the first alternative accepted the imāmate of Mu'āwiya and his descendants, and after them the caliphate of Marwān and his descendants. The Khārijites on their part always agreed on an imām from amongst themselves, provided he lived according to their beliefs and followed the path of justice in his dealings with them. Otherwise they deserted him and deposed him, or even put him to death.

Those who maintained that the imāmate was established by appointment differed after the death of 'Alī, some holding that he appointed his son Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya: these are the Kaisānīya. These, however, differed among themselves after the death of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya. Some maintained that he had not died, but that he would return and fill the earth with justice. Others, on the contrary, said that he had died, and that the imāmate had been transmitted to his son Abū Hāshim. These again differed among themselves. Some believed that the imāmate remained in Abū Hāshim's descendants from one appointment to another. Others, however, held that it had been transferred to another, but differed as to who that other was. Some said this other was Bayān b. Sam'ān al-Nahdī, others 'Alī b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Abbās. Others again said that it was 'Abdullāh b. Ḥarb al-Kindī, and others 'Abdullāh b. Mu'āwiya b. 'Abdullāh b. Ja'far b. Abū Ṭalib. They all agreed, however, that religion consists of obedience to a man. Hence they interpreted the laws of *sharī'a* in terms of a particular person, as will shortly be seen in our treatment of the sects.

Those who did not believe in the imāmate of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya believed in the appointment of Ḥasan and Ḥusain. They maintained that the imāmate cannot belong to two brothers except in the case of

Ḥasan and Ḥusain. These also differed among themselves. Some confined the imāmate to the descendants of Ḥasan, and so after Ḥasan's death believed in the imāmate of his son Ḥasan, followed by that of Ḥasan's son 'Abdullāh, of 'Abdullāh's son Muḥammad, and lastly, Muḥammad's brother Ibrāhīm – the two imāms who rose up during the reign of Manṣūr and were killed. Some believed that Imām Muḥammad would return. Some, however, transferred the appointment to the descendants of Ḥusain, after whose death they believed in the appointment of his son 'Alī b. Ḥusain Zain al-'Ābidīn. After this they differed. The Zaidiya believed in the imāmate of his son Zaid. They believed too that any Fāṭimid who rises in revolt, and is also a scholar, pious, brave and generous, is an imām who must be followed. They also permitted the return of the imāmate to the descendants of Ḥasan. Some of them came to a halt at a certain imām and believed in his return. Others permitted the imāmate to continue, and believed in the imāmate of every person who in his time had the required qualities. A description of their views will be given presently in detail.

As for the Imāmīya they believed in the imāmate, by appointment, of Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Bāqir, followed by that of Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq, also by appointment. After al-Ṣādiq, however, they differed among themselves concerning his sons as to which of them was the appointed one. There were five of these: Muḥammad, Ismā'īl, 'Abdullāh, Mūsā, and 'Alī. Some maintained the imāmate of Muḥammad. These are known as the 'Ammārīya. Others believed in the imāmate of Ismā'īl, and denied that he died during the life of his father: these are known as the Mubārakīya. Some went no further and believed in his return. Some permitted the imāmate to continue in his descendants, by one appointment after another, to our own day. These are called the Ismā'īlīya. Some believed in the imāmate of 'Abdullāh, known as the Snub-nosed, and in his return after death, for he died without leaving any issue. Some believed in the imāmate by appointment of Mūsā, whose father is reported to have said, 'The seventh is your *qā'im*; he is the namesake of the one who brought the Torah.'

These, too, differed among themselves. Some went no further than Mūsā and believed in his return, for they maintained that he did not die. Others did not commit themselves regarding his death: these are called the Mamṭūra. Others held his death for certain and permitted the imāmate to continue in his son 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā: these are known as the Qaṭ'īya. These again differed after his death with respect to each of his descendants.

The Twelvers carry on the imāmate from 'Alī al-Riḍa to his son

Muḥammad, from Muḥammad to his son 'Alī, from 'Alī to his son Ḥasan and, finally, to Ḥasan's son Muḥammad, the *qā'im*, the Awaited One, the twelfth imām. They believe that he is living, that he has not died, and that he will return to fill with justice an earth which is now filled with injustice. Others carry on the imāmate to Ḥasan al-'Askarī, after whom they either believe in the imāmate of his brother Ja'far, not going beyond him, or they express some doubt about Muḥammad. They are continually confused, either carrying on the imāmate or bringing it to an end: in the latter case believing either in return after death, or in concealment and return after concealment.

This is a summary of the differences on the question of the imāmate; details will be given when the sects are discussed.

The following are the differences in doctrinal matters. In the last days of the Companions there arose the heresy of Ma'bad al-Juhanī, Ghailān al-Dimashqī and Yūnus al-Aswārī, which maintained the power of man and refused to ascribe good and evil to divine decree. Wāṣil b. 'Atā', a pupil of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, followed in their footsteps. His pupil was 'Amr b. 'Ubaid who further developed the question of man's power. 'Amr was an emissary of Yazīd al-Nāqiṣ, during the Umayyad period, but afterwards he became a friend of Manṣūr whose imāmate he accepted. Manṣūr once praised him by saying, 'I threw grain out to the people and all gathered it up except 'Amr.'

The Wa'īdīya amongst the Khārijites, the Murji'a amongst the Jabrīya, and the Qadarīya all embarked upon their heresies at the time of Ḥasan. Wāṣil separated himself from the last group by expressing a belief in the intermediate position. Thus he and his followers became known as Mu'tazilites. Zaid b. 'Alī became the pupil of Wāṣil, from whom he learnt his doctrine. As a consequence all the Zaidīya became Mu'tazilites. Those who rejected Zaid b. 'Alī because he held views contrary to those of his ancestors on doctrinal matters, as well as on the question of association and dissociation, became known as the Rāfiḍites: they were a group from Kūfa.

After this the Mu'tazilite leaders studied the works of the philosophers as they became available during the reign of Ma'mūn. They then introduced the methods of the philosophers into theology, which they made into a branch of science. They gave it the name of *kalām*: either because the chief question on which they spoke and disputed was that of *kalām* (God's word), by which the whole discipline was called; or in imitation of the philosophers, who called one of their branches of learning Logic, for Logic and *kalām* are synonymous.

Abu 'l-Hudhail al-'Allāf, who was their greatest teacher, agreed with

the philosophers that God is knowing with knowledge, but that his knowledge is his essence; similarly, he is powerful with power, but that his power is his essence. He is the author of heresies on the questions of the divine word and will, of men's deeds, of belief in man's power, of man's appointed time and of man's sustenance, as will be made clear when we are explaining his views. A number of disputations took place between Abu 'l-Hudhail and Hishām b. al-Ḥakam on the question of anthropomorphism. Abū Ya'qūb al-Shaḥḥām and al-Ādamī, who were followers of Abu 'l-Hudhail, agreed with him in all his views.

During the reign of Mu'taṣim, Ibrāhīm b. Sayyār al-Naẓẓām went to excess in following the views of the philosophers, and separated himself from his predecessors by his Shī'ite heresies and his innovations on the question of man's power. He also separated himself from other Mu'tazilites on certain questions, as we shall mention. Among his followers were Muḥammad b. Shabīb, Abū Shimr, Mūsā b. 'Imrān, al-Faḍl al-Ḥadathī and Aḥmad b. Khābiṭ. Al-Aswārī agreed with him in all his heresies. So also did the Iskāfīya, the followers of Abū Ja'far al-Iskāfī, and the Ja'farīya, the followers of the two Ja'fars, Ja'far b. Mubashshir and Ja'far b. Ḥarb.

Next came the innovations of Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir; as for example, a belief in secondary effects in which he went to excess, being inclined to naturalist philosophy. He also held the belief that God has power to punish a child, but if he does so he is unjust. He held other such views peculiar to himself. Abū Mūsā al-Murdār, 'the Mu'tazilite monk', became his pupil, but differed from him in his denial of the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān from the point of view of language and style. It was in his time that persecution of the Orthodox theologians reached its height because of their belief in the eternity of the Qur'ān. Among his pupils were the two Ja'fars; Abū Zufar and Muḥammad b. Suwaid, the followers of al-Murdār; Abū Ja'far al-Iskāfī and 'Īsā b. al-Haitham, the followers of Ja'far b. Ḥarb, 'the Scarred One'. Among those who went to excess in the doctrine of man's power are Hishām b. 'Amr al-Fuwaṭī and his disciple al-Aṣamm. Both also attacked the imāmate of 'Alī, saying that an imāmate is not valid without the consent of the whole community. Both held too that it is impossible for God to know things before they come to pass. They deny also that the non-existent is a thing. Abu 'l-Ḥusain al-Khayyāṭ and Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Shaṭawī were followers of 'Īsā al-Ṣūfī, and afterwards attached themselves to Abū Mujālid. Ka'bī was a disciple of Abu 'l-Ḥusain al-Khayyāṭ; his views are in every respect the same as those of his master.

Mu'ammar b. 'Abbād al-Sulamī, Thumāma b. Ashras al-Namīrī and

Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, were all contemporaries and held similar views, though in some matters they had opinions of their own which we shall mention in due course. The later Mu'tazilites, as Abū 'Alī al-Jubba'ī, his son Abū Hāshim, Qāḍi 'Abd al-Jabbār and Abu 'l-Ḥusain al-Baṣrī, have given a summary of the teachings of their masters; but on some matters they follow their own opinions, which shall be considered further on.

The golden age of *kalām* began with the 'Abbāsid caliphs, Hārūn, Ma'mūn, Mu'taṣim, Wāthiq, and Mutawakkil, and closed with Ṣāḥib b. 'Abbād and a group of Dailamites. About the middle of this period there arose a group of Mu'tazila, such as Ḍirār b. 'Amr, Ḥafṣ al-Fard and Ḥusain al-Najjār, who belonged to the later school, and who differed from their masters on a number of questions.

There also appeared at the time of Naṣr b. Sayyār a man called Jahm b. Ṣafwān who propounded his unorthodox views on predetermination, *jabr*, in the city of Tirmidh. He was put to death at Marw by Sālim b. Aḥwaz al-Māzinī towards the close of the Umayyad period.

In each period there were differences of opinion between the Mu'tazilites and the Orthodox on the question of the attributes. The Orthodox were accustomed to argue not according to a scholastic method but by relying on authoritative statement. The Orthodox were called the Ṣifātīya. Some of them maintained the existence of the attributes of God in terms of entities subsisting in him, while some likened his attributes to those of creatures. All of them followed the literal meaning of the Qur'ān and *sunna*. They also argued with the Mu'tazilites over the question of the eternity of the world, again relying on the literal sense. 'Abdullāh b. Sa'īd al-Kullābī, Abu 'l-'Abbās al-Qalānisī and Ḥārith b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī were more exact in their thinking, and more skilled in scholastic argument.

A debate took place between Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Ismā'īl al-Ash'arī and his teacher on the question of what constitutes good and evil. Ash'arī forced his teacher to recognize certain consequences of his position, to which he could give no answer. Ash'arī, thereupon, left him and joined the Orthodox, whose position he supported by the scholastic method. In this way a school of his own arose. His method was followed by a number of scholars, as, for example, Qāḍi Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī, Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarā'īnī, and Abū Bakr b. Fūrak. There is not much difference of opinion between these theologians.

[During this time] there appeared a man from Sijistān who manifested a certain show of piety, named Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Karrām. He was a man of little learning, but had taken from various sects a

confused mixture of ideas, which he put into his book and spread among the vulgar of Gharja, Ghūr and in the country of Khurāsān. His teaching was systematized and developed into a school. He was supported by Maḥmūd b. Subuktegīn, the Sultan, who on account of the Karrāmiya persecuted the Traditionalists and the Shī'ites. Muḥammad b. Karrām's school closely resembled that of the Khārijites; they are crude corporealists, except for Muḥammad b. al-Haiṣam who does not go as far as the others do.

5 The reason which made necessary the arrangement of this book on arithmetical principles: reference will also be made in this chapter to arithmetical procedures

Since the basis of arithmetic is precision and conciseness, and my aim in writing this book is to deal with all beliefs with brevity, I have chosen the most comprehensive method of arrangement; and in pursuing my aims and purposes I have followed arithmetical procedures in the divisions and subdivisions of my book. I intend to explain the methodology of this science and the number of its divisions, lest it should be thought that, since I am a jurist and a theologian, I would be a stranger to its ways and lack understanding of its significance and its symbolism. Therefore I have chosen the soundest and best of arithmetical procedures, and given for it the clearest and most concrete of proofs. I made it [i.e. the division of the book] correspond to the science of numbers, my chief desire being to derive benefit from it.

Grades of arithmetic begin with one and end with seven; they do not go beyond that. The first grade is the 'beginning of arithmetic', *ṣadr al-ḥisāb*. It is the first object of division. From one point of view it is an odd number without a pair, but from another point of view it is a whole, and admits division. From the point of view of its being a whole it is divisible, and as such may be divided in two parts. The form of the extension must have two extremes under which may be written general details, general measurements, definition, movement, transference, aspects of the whole viewed in general terms, statements about the subject and what is connected with it. Under this should be written prominently at the left corner the numbers constituting the whole.

The second grade is the root, *al-aṣl*, and its form is determined, *muḥaqqaq*. It is the first division made on the first whole. It is even, not odd; it must be restricted to two parts, and not extended to a third; the form of its extension must be shorter than the 'beginning', for the

part is smaller than the whole. Underneath this will be written what is particular to it, as orientation, classification, and other specifications. This form has a pair which is like it in extension, but it need not be its equal in measurement.

The third grade stems from the root, and its form, too, is determined. It is the second division which the first and the second subject undergo, and which cannot be less than two parts, not more than four. Those writers who exceed this number fall into error and show their ignorance of mathematics, as we shall shortly show. The form of its extension has to be shorter than that of the 'root'. Underneath it also must be written fully and clearly whatever is appropriate to it.

The fourth grade is called *al-maṭmūs*, the effaced, and its form is ط. It may exceed four, but it is better if it is limited to a minimum. It is shorter in extension than the previous one.

The fifth grade is called *al-ṣaghīr*, the small, and its form is ص. It may go to the maximum limit of division and subdivision. It is shorter in extension than the previous one.

The sixth grade is called *al-mu'wajj*, the curved, and its form is ﻉ. This also may be subdivided till no further subdivision is possible.

The seventh grade is called *al-mu'aqqad*, the knotty, and its form is لـلـ. It extends from one side to the other, not that it is the 'beginning of arithmetic', but the 'conclusion' which looks like the 'beginning'.

These are the symbols of arithmetic and the total number of its divisions. Every division has its like corresponding to it and its pair equalling it in extension. This should never be lost sight of. Arithmetic is both a record of past events and an indication of the future.

We shall explain now the quantitative aspect of these forms: why the divisions are restricted to seven; why the 'first beginning' is an odd number having no pair in form; why the 'root' is divisible only into two and not into three; why the next division is restricted to four, and why the other divisions are unlimited.

The scholars who have discussed the science of numbers and arithmetic differ among themselves regarding 'one'. Is it part of number? Or is it the starting-point of number, not itself being included in number? This difference of opinion is due to the wide meaning of the word one; for the word one is used and understood as that of which number is composed – two, for example, has no other meaning than one plus one; likewise with regard to three and four. The word one, however, may also be used as meaning that from which numbers proceed, that is, one is the cause of number and not part of it; in other words, it does not enter into the composition of number.

Oneness may even be regarded as an aspect pertaining to all numbers; not in the sense that number is composed of it, but that every existing thing is one in its genus, in its species, and in its individuality. Thus we say 'One mankind', or, 'One individual'. Likewise in number itself: thus three in its threeness may be said to be one 'three'.

In the first sense oneness is part of numbers, in the second sense the cause of numbers, and in the third sense an aspect pertaining to numbers. But none of these three meanings of one is applicable to God. God is one in a way different from that in which other things are one. These unities and multiplicities are derived from him. It is impossible, moreover, for him to be divided in any way.

The majority of scholars speaking on numbers agree that one is not included in number and, therefore, the first root of number is two. Number is divided into even and odd. The first odd number is three, and the first even number is four; beyond four number is a combination of these. Thus five is composed of the root number and the odd number, and is called the round number. Six is composed of two odd numbers, and is called the complete number. Seven is composed of odd and even numbers, and is called the perfect number. Eight is composed of two even numbers; it is the beginning of another series of combinations about which we do not intend to speak.

The 'beginning of arithmetic' corresponds to one, inasmuch as it is the cause of number and not part of it. Therefore it is unique and has no counterpart. Since the 'root' of number is two, its determination is limited to only two divisions; and since number is divided into odd and even, the determinations on this basis are limited to four [numbers], the first odd number being three and the first even number four; these are the limit. The other numbers will be composed of these. Therefore the universal elements in numbers are one, two, three and four; these are the limit. Numbers beyond these are composed of them without a limit to their composition. The remaining sections, therefore, cannot be restricted to a definite number but go as far as calculations will go. Beyond this the application of number to the numbered, and of the prime to the composite, belongs to another science. We shall discuss this when we treat of the views of the ancient philosophers.

Conclusion

When the introductory sections have been completed as well as possible we shall begin to treat of the views of mankind from the time of Adam

to our own day, hoping that no view or belief will be omitted. Under every chapter and division we shall write what is appropriate to it, so that it will be clear why a particular heading was used for each chapter. Under every sect mentioned we shall indicate what views and beliefs are common to all the sub-sects, and under every sub-sect what is peculiar to it and held only by its followers.

We shall give an account of all the various divisions of Islamic sects, which total seventy-three. On the various sub-sects outside the Community we shall restrict ourselves to those better known for their systems of thought. We shall treat first those meriting to be treated first, and place at the end those meriting to be placed there.

The art of arithmetic requires that opposite the ends of the lines all the explanatory comment be written; the art of writing on its part requires that the margin should be left free, as is customary among writers. Accordingly I have paid attention to the requirements of both these arts. I have arranged the chapters according to arithmetical principles and left the margins as is customary among writers. I seek the help of God and in him I trust. He is sufficient for me, for he is the best of Guardians.

Prelude

The beliefs of mankind: those belonging to revealed religions and communities, and those following human ideas and philosophies

Our treatment shall cover Islamic sects and others who have a truly revealed book, as the Jews and Christians; those with a book of a somewhat similar kind, as the Magians and the Manicheans; those who have penal laws and statutes but no book, as the first Sabaeans; and, finally, those who have neither book nor penal laws nor religious laws, as the early philosophers, atheists, star-worshippers, idol-worshippers and Brahmins. We shall mention the founders and followers of each. We shall quote the original sources and refer to the writings of each group, and shall follow their terminology after we have become acquainted with their methods, and made an investigation of their basic principles and conclusions.

The true division [in religion], like that between negative and positive, is, we maintain, that mankind with regard to beliefs is divided into those who follow a revealed religion and those who follow human ideas and beliefs. When a man holds a belief or expresses an opinion he is either acquiring it from someone else, or is following his own ideas. One who acquires knowledge from someone else is the one who submits and obeys. Religion means obedience, and the one who submits and obeys is the religious man; one who follows his own independent judgment is an innovator and a heretic. There is a saying of the Prophet that the one who seeks counsel will not be unhappy, but the one who follows his own counsel will not be happy.

It may happen sometimes that the one who acquires a belief from another is simply a blind follower, who by chance has a religion because

he had parents or teachers who had false beliefs. These he followed without reflecting whether they were true or false, and without discerning between the sound and the unsound. Such a one receives no benefit, for he has made no gain nor acquired any knowledge, nor followed a teacher after due discernment and conviction. 'Such as have testified to the truth, and that knowingly'[1] is a necessary condition for following another. This ought to be remembered.

It may also happen that the one following his own ideas derives them from knowledge he has already acquired. If he is aware of the source from which they were derived and the method by which they were derived, he will not, strictly speaking, be following his own ideas, for he has derived his ideas from knowledge already acquired. 'Those of them whose task it is to discover would have known the matter'[2] is a principle of great importance. It is those who follow an absolutely independent course who deny the prophethood of the prophets, such as, for example, the philosophers, Sabaeans and Brahmins. They do not believe in religious laws and divine commandments, but instead make rational laws by which they may live. Those who derive their knowledge from others are the ones who believe in the prophethood of the prophets. Those who believe in religious laws do also believe in rational laws, but the reverse is not true.

Part I

Introduction

Followers of religions and members of religious communities: Muslims, people of the book and those with something similar to a book

We are treating here of the meaning of the words *dīn*, *milla*, *shir'a*, *minhāj*, *islām*, *ḥanīfīya*, *sunna* and *jamā'a*. These are modes of expression that are found in the Qur'ān; each by reason of etymology and usage has a specific meaning and signifies a certain reality. We have already explained the meaning of the word *dīn*, namely, that it is obedience and submission; as God says, 'Religion with God is Islām.'[1] Sometimes it is used in the meaning of recompense. There is a saying, '*kamā tadīnu tudānu*,' which means 'As you do so shall you be recompensed.' It may also be used in the meaning of reckoning on the day of judgment. God says, 'That is the true religion.'[2] Accordingly the *mutadayyin* is one who submits, who is obedient, and who believes in recompense and reckoning on the day of judgment. God says, 'I have chosen Islām for your religion.'[3]

Since man needs to live together with others of his species to provide for his subsistence and also to prepare himself for his eternal destiny, this corporate living has to be of a kind that will ensure mutual defence and co-operation; by mutual defence he will be enabled to keep what is his, and by mutual co-operation to obtain what he does not possess. This form of corporate living is the *milla*. The special path leading to it is called the *minhāj*, *shir'a* or *sunna*. The agreement on that *sunna* is called *jamā'a*; as God says, 'To every one of you we have appointed a right way and an open road.'[4]

The creation of the *milla* and the prescribing of the **way** is not possible except through one chosen by God, whose genuine**ness** is manifested

by certain signs. Sometimes the sign is contained in the message itself, sometimes it accompanies the message, and sometimes it comes after it.

Let it be remembered that the greatest *milla* was that of Abraham, which was called the Ḥanīfīya. It is opposed to Sabaeanism as a kind of antithesis. How this is so we shall mention later. God speaks of 'the *milla* of your father Abraham.'[5]

The *sharī'a* began with Noah; as God says, 'He has laid down for you as religion that he charged Noah with.'[6] But laws and commandments began with Adam, Shīth and Idrīs. All Sharī'as and religions, all religious ways and paths, reached their culmination through Muḥammad, in that *sharī'a* which is the most perfect, most beautiful and most excellent; as God said, 'Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have chosen Islam for your religion.'[7]

It is said that to Adam was given names and to Noah the meaning of these names, but to Abraham was given both names and their meanings; to Moses was given revelation and to Jesus the deeper understanding of revelation; but to Muḥammad was given both revelation and its deeper understanding, according to 'the creed of your father Abraham'.[8] The mode of the first prophetic affirmation and its perfection through the second in such a way that each affirmation confirmed past religions and religious ways; the establishment of correspondence between the divine word and the creatures, and of harmony between religion and nature – all this is proper to the prophets; no one else shares this honour with them. It is said that God established his religion on the model of his creation so that his creation would lead man to his religion and his religion to his creation.

Section I
Muslims

Introduction

Introduction I

We have already explained the meaning of *islām*, and we shall now explain the difference between *islām, īmān* and *iḥsān*. We shall show the first, the intermediate and the final stages [of faith] by means of the famous tradition about the interrogations of Gabriel, when he appeared in the garb of a bedouin and sat so close to the Prophet that their knees touched. He said to the Prophet, 'O Apostle of God, what is *islām*?' The Prophet replied, 'To bear witness that there is no God but Allāh, that I am a messenger of God, to observe prayer, pay the zakāt, fast in the month of Ramadān and perform the pilgrimage if you are able to do so.' Gabriel said, 'You have spoken the truth.' He then asked, 'What is *īmān*?' The Messenger replied, 'To believe in God, his angels, his scriptures, his messengers, the Last Day; to believe also in the *qadar* (determination of good and evil).' Gabriel said, 'You have spoken the truth.' He then asked, 'What is *iḥsān*?' The Prophet replied, 'To worship God as though you see him, but if not, to know that he sees you.' Gabriel said, 'You have spoken the truth.' He finally asked, 'When is the Hour?' The Prophet replied, 'The one who is asked about it does not know more than the one asking.' Gabriel then arose and departed, and the Prophet said, 'That was Gabriel who came to teach you about your religion.' In this way the Prophet distinguished between the meaning of *islām* and *īmān. Islām*, however, is sometimes used in the sense of outward submission, and in this sense there is no difference between the faithful and the hypocrite. God says, 'The bedouins say, 'We believe.' Say, 'You do not believe;' rather say, 'We submit.''[1] Thus the Qur'ān distinguishes between the two words.

Since *islām* in the sense of outward submission is something common

to all, this is the beginning. If it is accompanied by sincerity, and if one believes in God, his angels, his scriptures, his messengers and the Last Day; and if he also believes and affirms that all good and evil are determined by God, that is, that what befell him could not have been avoided by him, and what did not befall him could not have befallen him: such a one is a true believer, *mu'min*.

Thus when submission and faith are brought together, and outward effort is united with inner vision so that the unseen becomes the seen, the final stage is reached. Thus *islām* is the beginning, *īmān* the intermediate stage and *iḥsān* the final stage. Used in this way the word *muslim* includes those who attain to salvation as well as those who perish in hell. Sometimes the word *islām* is used together with *iḥsān*, as when God says, 'Whoever submits his will to God in sincerity.'[2]

It is in this sense also that we may understand God's words: 'I have chosen Islam for your religion.'[3] As also in the following verses: 'Religion with God is Islam;'[4] 'When his Lord said to him 'Submit,' he said, 'I have submitted to the Lord of all being;'[5] 'See that you die not save in submission.'[6] In this sense the word *islām* is used only for those attaining to salvation.

God knows best.

Introduction II

Those who are engaged in *uṣūl* (root matters) differ among themselves with regard to the unity of God, his justice, 'promise and warning', revelation and reason. We shall now go on to speak of the meaning of *uṣūl*, *furū'* (branches) and other such words.

Some theologians say that *uṣūl* means the knowledge of God in his oneness and his attributes, and the knowledge of the prophets with their signs and proofs; but, in general, every question whose discussion leads to the determination of truth belongs to *uṣūl*. Now since religion consists of knowledge and obedience, knowledge being the root and obedience the branch, whoever treats of the knowledge and unity of God is an *uṣūlī* (theologian), and whoever treats of obedience and law is a *furū'ī* (jurisconsult). *Uṣūl* is the subject of scholastic theology, and *furū'* is the subject of jurisprudence. Some scholars believe that whatever is within the sphere of the intellect, and can be attained by reflection and argumentation, belongs to *uṣūl*; and whatever belongs to the sphere of probability, and is reached through analogy, *qiyās*, and personal endeavour, *ijtihād*, belongs to *furū'*.

As regards the unity of God, the Orthodox and all the Ṣifātīya say that God is one in his essence, without division. He is one in his eternal attributes; there is no other like him. He is one and alone in his deeds; he has no associates. The Mu'tazilites say that God is one in his essence without any division or attributes. He is one and alone in his deeds and has no associates. There is no eternal being other than he and no partner in his deeds. The existence of two eternal beings is impossible. It is likewise impossible for one thing to be an object of two powers. This is the unity of God.

As for justice, according to the Orthodox, God is just in his deeds in the sense that he disposes freely of what is his own and is under his dominion, doing as he pleases and judging as he wills; for justice consists in putting everything in its due place, and disposing freely of what is under one's dominion according to one's pleasure and knowledge. Injustice is the opposite of this. For God, therefore, any injustice in his judgment or in his way of acting is inconceivable. According to the Mu'tazilites, on the other hand, justice is that which reason manifests as in accord with wisdom, and which consists in acting in a manner that is right and in promoting the good.

As for 'promise and warning' the Orthodox say that promise and warning are God's eternal word. God promised a reward for what he commanded and warned against what he forbade. Whoever attains to salvation and deserves a reward does so because of God's promise; whoever perishes and deserves punishment does so because of God's warning. God is not obliged to do anything on the basis of reason. The Mu'tazilites, on the contrary, say that there is no eternal word. God in fact commanded and forbade, promised and warned, through a created speech. Whoever attains to salvation and deserves reward does so on account of his own deeds; whoever perishes and deserves punishment does so on account of his own deeds. Reason in its wisdom requires this.

As for revelation and reason, the Orthodox say that all obligations are known through revelation, though all knowledge comes through the intellect. In other words, the intellect does not discern the goodness or evil of things, nor make demands, or impose obligations; revelation, on the other hand, does not give information, that is, it does not cause knowledge, but imposes obligations. The Mu'tazilites, however, say that all knowledge as well as all obligation comes through reason; to show gratitude, for example, to one bestowing favours is obligatory before receiving revelation. Goodness and evil are intrinsic qualities of what is good and evil.

These are the basic matters which are the subject of discussion among

the theologians. We shall give a detailed account of the views of each group. Every science has a subject and various matters connected with it, which, as far as possible, we shall mention with the help of God.

Introduction III
The Mu'tazilites and others, namely, the Jabrites, the Ṣifātīya and combinations of these

The sects of the Mu'tazilites and Ṣifātīya are utterly opposed to each other. The same may be said of the Qadarites and Jabrites, the Murji'a and Wa'idīya, the Shī'ites and Khārijites. This opposition between one group and another has at all times manifested itself. Each sect has had its own body of ideas and its own books composed by its adherents. Each has had a state authority which supported it, and powers which submitted to it.

Notes

Introduction

1 Also Abu 'l-Fatḥ b. Aḥmad al-Shahrastānī.
2 Cf. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās.
3 *Ibid.*, p. 273. Cf. also Ṣalāh al-Dīn Khalīl b. Aibak al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi 'l-Wafayāt*, Bibliotheca Islamica, vol. 3, p. 278.
4 The list of Shahrastānī's works given by Badran in his introduction to the *Milal* is as follows:
(1) *Kitāb al-Milal wa 'l-Niḥal*; (2) *Kitāb Nihāyat al-Iqdām*; (3) *Al-Irshād ilā 'aqā'id al-'ibād*; (4) *Al-Aqṭār fi 'l-uṣūl*; (5) *Tārīkh al-ḥukamā*; (6) *Talhkīṣ al-aqsām li-madhāhib al-anām*; (7) *Daqā'iq al-awhām*; (8) *Sharḥ sūra Yūsuf*; (9) *Al-'Uyūn wa 'l-anhār*; (10) *Ghāyat al-marām fī 'ilm al-kalām*; (11) *Qiṣṣat Mūsā wa 'l-Khiḍr*; (12) *Al-Mabda' wa 'l-Ma'ād*; (13) *Majālis maktūba*; (14) *Muṣāra'at al-falāsifa*; (15) *Al-Manāhij wa 'l-āyāt*; (16) *Shubhāt Aristatālīs wa Ibn Sīna wa naqḍuhā*; (17) *Nihāyat al-awhām*;
Badrān also includes the disputed *Mafātiḥ al-asrār*. Cf. Kitāb al-Milal wa 'l-Niḥal, ed. Muḥammad b. Fatḥullāh Badrān, Cairo, 1956, p. 8 f.
5 Cf. 'Alī b. Zaid Zāhīr al-Din Al-Baihaqī, *Tārīkh ḥukamā' al-Islām*, ed. Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī, Damascus, 1946, p. 141.
6 *Ibid.*
7 Al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb Nihāyat al-Iqdām fī 'ilmi 'l-kalām*, ed. Alfred Guillaume, Oxford University Press, London, 1934, p. x.
8 *Ibid.*, p. ix.
9 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. 'Alī Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'īya al-kubrā*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Tanaḥī & 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Ḥulw, Cairo, 1964, vol. 6, pp. 128–130.
10 *Al-Wāfī*, vol. 3, p. 278 f.
11 Cf. p. 11, passim.
12 Thus he quotes with approval the following tradition. The Prophet

also said: 'My community will be divided into seventy-three sects but only one of these will be saved, the others will perish.' When asked which was the one that would attain salvation, he replied, 'Those who follow the *sunna* and the congregation.' He was further asked, 'What is the *sunna* and the congregation?' He replied, 'That which I and my companions practise.' Cf. below, p. 10; cf. also p. 12 and the opening remarks on the Ṣifātīya (pp. 79f) and the Anthropomorphists (pp. 88f).

13 Cf. below, p. 167.
14 Cf. below, p. 168.
15 Cf. below, p. 170.
16 Cf. MS. 78/8086; *al-Milal* p. 19.
17 *Al-Milal wa 'l-Niḥal*, translated by Dr Sayyid Moḥammad Riḍa Jalālī Nā'īnī Iqbāl AH 1350, p. 42 f. Professor Pājūh of Tehran University also expressed oral agreement with this opinion.
18 *Essays and Studies* presented to Stanley Arthur Cook, ed. J. Winston Thomas, London, 1950, ch. XI.
19 Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Murtaḍā, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazila*, Catholic Press, Beirut, 1961, p. 1.
20 Cf. Albert N. Nader, *Le système philosophique des Mu'tazila*, Beyrouth, 1956, p. 44.
21 Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Ismā'īl al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn*, ed., H. Ritter, Istanbul, 1929, Leipzig, 1933.
22 Cf. below, p. 149.
23 Cf. Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Ismā'īl al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyi al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Cairo, 1954, vol. 1, p. 78.
24 Cf. below, p. 155.
25 Cf. below, p. 50; also 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Khayyāṭ, *Kitāb al-intiṣār wa 'l-radd 'ala Ibn al-Rāwandī al-Mulḥid*, ed. H. S. Nyberg, Cairo, 1925, p. 44.
26 The statement is to the effect that all men are infidels; cf. below, p. 60, and *Kitāb al-Intiṣār*, p. 54 f.
27 Shāfhūr b. Ṭāhir al-Isfarā'īnī, *Al-Tabṣir fi 'l-dīn wa tamyīz al-firqa al-nājiya 'an al-firaq al-hālikīn*, Cairo, 1940, p. 41 f; cf. also *al-Milal*, p. 53.
28 Cf. 'Abd al-Qāhir b. Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bain al-firaq*, Cairo, p. 14.
29 Cf. below, p. 17.
30 Cf. *Al-Farq bain al-firaq*, p. 277 f.
31 Cf. below, p. 50.
32 *Ibid.*
33 *Ibid.*, p. 57.
34 *Ibid.*, pp. 46f.
35 *Ṭabaqāt*, p. 128.

36 Al-Shahrastānī, ***Kitāb al-Milal wa 'l-Niḥal***, ed. Muḥammad b. Fatḥullāh Badrān, Cairo, 1951.

General Introduction

1 Qur'ān, 7, 181.
2 *Ibid.*, 15, 36.
3 *Ibid.*, 64, 6.
4 *Ibid.*, 17, 61.
5 *Ibid.*, 17, 94.
6 *Ibid.*, 7, 12.
7 *Ibid.*, 43, 52.
8 *Ibid.*, 2, 118.
9 *Ibid.*, 15, 33.
10 *Ibid.*, 2, 268.
11 *Ibid.*, 3, 154.
12 *Ibid.*, 3, 156.
13 *Ibid.*, 16, 35.
14 *Ibid.*, 36, 47.
15 *Ibid.*, 13, 13.
16 *Ibid.*, 3, 144.

Prelude

1 Qur'ān, 43, 86.
2 *Ibid.*, 4, 83.

Part I

Introduction

1 Qur'ān, 3, 19.
2 *Ibid.*, 30, 30.
3 *Ibid.*, 5, 3.
4 *Ibid.*, 5, 48.
5 *Ibid.*, 22, 78.
6 *Ibid.*, 42, 13.
7 *Ibid.*, 5, 3.
8 *Ibid.*, 22, 78.

Section I Muslims

Introduction

1 Qur'ān, 49, 14.
2 *Ibid.*, 2, 112.
3 *Ibid.*, 5, 3.
4 *Ibid.*, 3, 19.
5 *Ibid.*, 2, 113.
6 *Ibid.*, 2, 132.

Chapter 1 The Mu'tazilites

1 Qur'ān, 8, 42.
2 *Ibid.*, 42, 7.
3 *Ibid.*, 111, 3.
4 *Ibid.*, 5, 110.
5 *Ibid.*, 89, 22.
6 *Ibid.*, 6, 158.
7 *Ibid.*, 7, 34.
8 *Ibid.*, 6, 38.
9 *Ibid.*, 35, 24.
10 *Ibid.*, 8, 63.
11 *Ibid.*, 49, 7.
12 *Ibid.*, 2, 7.
13 *Ibid.*, 4, 155.
14 *Ibid.*, 36, 9.
15 The full name as given by al-Murtaḍā is Abu 'l-Qāsim 'Abdullāh b. Maḥmūd al-Ka'bī. See above p. V.
16 Cf. A. S. Tritton, *Muslim Theology*, pp. 148-9:

> His doctrine of the Qur'ān was very like that of Abu 'l-Hudhail, that it is an accident and can be in many places at once. He differed from the rest of the Mu'tazila by holding that the word of God endures. When a man reads the Qur'ān, God creates a word for himself along with the spoken words, and this word is heard, letter by letter, with every recitation. Al-Juwainī adds further details. The 'word' is words which accompany the sounds but are not those sounds; they are in the written book also but are not the visible letters and lines; they are heard though they are not sounds. In every recitation are the sounds, the reading (sense), and the word of God. During the recitation the word inheres in one who is not God; when the reader stops, the word ceases to be in him. If many recite a verse together, the word of God is in each one yet it is still

one. Both God and man need a special constitution to produce those sounds which are speech.

Chapter 2 The Jabrīya

1 Qur'ān, 11, 107.
2 *Ibid.*

Chapter 3 The Ṣifātīya

1 Qur'ān, 20, 5.
2 *Ibid.*, 38, 75.
3 *Ibid.*, 89, 22.
4 *Ibid.*, 75, 22.
5 *Ibid.*, 17, 15.
6 *Ibid.*, 21, 23.
7 *Ibid.*, 38, 75.
8 *Ibid.*, 3, 7.
9 *Ibid.*, 36, 58.
10 *Ibid.*, 28, 30.
11 *Ibid.*, 4, 164.
12 *Ibid.*, 7, 144.
13 *Ibid.*, 7, 145.
14 *Ibid.*, 9, 6.
15 *Ibid.*, 56, 77 ff.
16 *Ibid.*, 80, 13 ff.
17 *Ibid.*, 97, 1.
18 *Ibid.*, 2, 185.
19 *Ibid.*, 16, 40.
20 *Ibid.*, 36, 82.

Chapter 4 The Khārijites

1 Qur'ān, 2, 204.
2 *Ibid.*, 2, 207.
3 *Ibid.*, 4, 77.
4 *Ibid.*, 5, 54.
5 *Ibid.*, 3, 28.
6 *Ibid.*, 40, 28.
7 *Ibid.*, 4, 95.
8 *Ibid.*, 9, 90.
9 *Ibid.*, 6, 145.
10 *Ibid.*, 6, 96.

Chapter 5 The Murji'ites

1 Qur'ān, 7, 111.
2 *Ibid.*, 2, 34.

Chapter 6 The Shi'ites

1 Qur'ān, 5, 93.
2 *Ibid.*, 2, 210.
3 *Ibid.*, 28, 88.
4 *Ibid.*, 5, 67.
5 *Ibid.*, 4, 59.
6 *Ibid.*, 48, 18.
7 *Ibid.*, 9, 100.
8 *Ibid.*, 9, 117.
9 *Ibid.*, 24, 55.
10 *Ibid.*, 9, 105.
11 *Ibid.*, 87, 1 f.
12 *Ibid.*, 33, 72.
13 The text as stands suggests that 'the trust' offered was to prevent 'Alī from obtaining the imāmate, whereas it is clear from the sources especially Baghdādī, that 'the trust' is one of protection of 'Alī from those seeking to do him injustice. The context itself also favours protection. We have, therefore, added the words of Baghdādī to give this sense; cf. *al-Farq bain al-Firaq*, Cairo, p. 240.
14 Qur'ān, 33, 72.
15 *Ibid.*, 59, 16.
16 *Ibid.*, 34, 5.
17 *Ibid.*, 10, 100.
18 *Ibid.*, 16, 68.
19 *Ibid.*, 53, 42.
20 *Ibid.*, 9, 33.
21 *Ibid.*, 4, 65.

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Glossary

badā' derived from *badā* meaning to appear or seem. *Badā'* in God means change in opinion and knowledge.

fāsiq a sinful person; a person not meeting the legal requirements of righteousness (Hans Wehr); according to Mu'tazila, a grave sinner who ceases to be a *mu'min*, but is not an unbeliever, *kāfir*.

ḥujja proof or argument. According to Shī'a the person of the prophet or imam is himself the 'proof', *ḥujja*, through whom God is known.

ijtihād exercise by a jurist of his personal opinion in a matter of Islamic Law.

imām ordinarily used for one who leads in the congregational prayer. Also used as a synonym for a caliph. With Shī'a it acquired a connotation of spiritual leadership.

īmān faith and belief.

irjā' giving of hope to a sinner or postponement of judgment regarding such a person.

jabr determination of man's act by God.

kasb acquisition: the term is used by Ash'arī to define human responsibility in one's acts. Acts are created by God, but acquired by man.

luṭf divine grace.

muwāfāt the state of faith in man at the time of his death.

nāṭiq revealer – a term used by Shī'a.

qadar determination of good and evil by God or by man. If by God, often called predetermination; if by man, often known as free will.

qā'im one who rises after death; resurrector. In the Ismā'īlīya the word is used for the seventh imām before the beginning of the new cycle.

shubha doubt, or calling into question.

taqiya a doctrine held by many Shī'a and some Khārijite sects allowing members to live in a state of dissimulation, i.e., hiding one's belief and sectarian identity.

taqlīd blind obedience in matters of Islamic Law.

ta'ṭīl and *tanzīh* holding God's attributes as non-entities.

tawallud coming into being of secondary or associated affects.

waṣī a legatee.

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